

REMARKS

Claims 1-4 and 7-20 are presented for consideration, with Claims 1 and 11 being independent.

Independent Claim 1 has been amended to further distinguish Applicants' invention from the cited art. In addition, Claim 11 has been placed in independent form and thus includes the features of Claim 1. Still further, editorial changes have been made to Claims 4, 7, and 8, and new Claims 13-20 have been added to provide an additional scope of protection (and correspond to Claims 2, 3, 4, 7, 8, 9, 10, and 12, respectively).

Initially, Figure 7A was objected to for not being labeled as "Prior Art". In response, Applicants are submitting concurrently herewith a replacement sheet of drawings labeling Figure 7A as --Prior Art--. Approval of the drawing correction is respectfully requested.

Claim 11 is rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 112, second paragraph, as allegedly being indefinite for the reasons set forth on page 2 of the Office Action. As noted above, Claim 11 has been placed in independent form as suggested in the Office Action. Accordingly, reconsideration and withdrawal of the rejection under 35 U.S.C. § 112, second paragraph, is respectfully requested.

Claims 1-6 and 9 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 102(b), as allegedly being anticipated by Click '051. Claims 11 and 12 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103, as allegedly being obvious over Click. In addition, Claims 7, 8 and 10 are rejected as allegedly being obvious over Click in view of Branecky '151. These rejections are respectfully traversed.

Claim 1 of Applicants' invention relates to a sheet folding apparatus for folding a sheet by nipping the sheet taking a predetermined position in a convey direction as a

fold and conveying the sheet by means of a pair of folding rollers. As claimed, at least one of the pair of folding rollers has a single large diameter portion, provided within a convey range in a sheet width direction of a minimum size sheet foldable in the sheet folding apparatus, and small diameter portions at both sides of the large diameter portion. As amended, Claim 1 sets forth that a gap formed at the small diameter portion between the pair of folding rollers is smaller than a thickness of the sheet as folded. Support for the amendments to Claim 1 is shown in Figure 6 and the accompanying specification on page 29, line 25, et. seq., of the specification.

In accordance with Applicants' claimed invention, an efficient and high performance sheet folding apparatus can be provided.

As discussed in the previous of Amendment of February 17, 2004, Click relates to an apparatus for flattening a blown tubular film 34 by passing the film between an upper roller 21 and a lower roller 22. As shown in Figure 4, the upper roller includes two recesses 28 corresponding to each end section, and the side edges of the tubular film passes through the recesses to form parallel edge cushions 35.

In contrast to Applicants' claimed invention, however, Click fails to teach or suggest, among other features, a gap formed at the small diameter portion between the pair of folding rollers that is smaller than a thickness of a sheet as folded. To the contrary, Click discloses that the depth of the depressions, or recessions, will be "about 5 to 20 times the thickness of the film being produced" (see, column 4, lines 60-75). Accordingly, reconsideration and withdrawal of the rejection of Claims 1-6 and 9 under 35 U.S.C. § 102(b), is respectfully requested.

As Claim 11 has been amended to include the features of Claim 1, reconsideration and withdrawal of the rejection of Claims 11 and 12 under 35 U.S.C. § 103, is also respectfully requested.

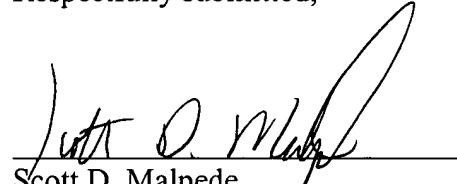
The secondary citation to Branecky relates to grooved paper folding rollers and was relied upon for providing a gap between rollers that is smaller than a thickness of the conveyed sheets.

It is respectfully submitted, however, that the gap in Click is specifically set so that a cushion of air can remain along each side of the thermoplastic film, forming the two parallel edge cushions 35 (see, Figure 4). Therefore, it is respectfully submitted that it would not have been obvious to modify Click (and, in fact, against its teachings) in the manner proposed in the Office Action. Thus, reconsideration and withdrawal of the rejection of Claims 7, 8 and 10 under 35 U.S.C. § 103, is respectfully requested.

Accordingly, it is submitted that Applicants' invention as set forth in independent Claims 1 and 11 is patentable over the cited art. In addition, dependent Claims 2-4, 7-10 and 12-20 set forth additional features of Applicants' invention. Independent consideration of the dependent claims is respectfully requested.

Applicants' undersigned attorney may be reached in our Washington, D.C. office by telephone at (202) 530-1010. All correspondence should continue to be directed to our below listed address.

Respectfully submitted,



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